

Please note – these Minutes have been edited to remove any commercially sensitive or confidential discussions

ITEM 2

MELVILLE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Minute of the Board Meeting held on
Wednesday 21 March 2018
at 5.30pm in Board Room, Corn Exchange, Dalkeith

PRESENT: Caron Quinn, Chair
David Bond, Vice-Chair
Glen Alexander
Donna Bogdanovic
Emily Kasiera
Clare Marshall
Allan Murphy
Scott Pryde
Bill Takhar
Sean Gillespie
Bob Jack
Andrew Dougherty

IN ATTENDANCE: Andrew Noble, Chief Executive
Morag MacDonald, Chief Operating Officer
Nikki Ross, Housing Officer (Item 3)
Nancy Booth, Property Services Manager
Sean Dickson, Housing Services Manager
Alistair Berwick, AFTS (Item 4)
Mary Monteith, PA to Chief Executive (Minute)

C QUINN IN THE CHAIR

1a. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and advised that we had a number of additional attendees at this meeting:

A Housing Officer is in attendance for Item 3
Alistair Berwick from ATFS for Item 4
The Property Services Manager for Item 6

**Action
Required
Note**

	The Housing Services Manager for Item 10	Action Required
1b.	DECLARATIONS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	<u>Noted</u> that there were no declarations of other business.	Note
1c.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	<u>Noted</u> that the Chief Executive and the Chief Operating Officer declared that they sit on the Board of Directors for Ironmills Developments Ltd.	Note
1d.	APOLOGIES	
	Apologies were received from Paul Cameron and Barbara Shearer	
2.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING 24 JANUARY 2018 AND MATTERS ARISING	
2.1	<u>Noted</u> that the minutes were <u>approved</u> by Allan Murphy and <u>seconded</u> by Bill Takhar	Approve
	Matters Arising	
2.2	<u>Noted</u> that there were no matters arising from these minutes.	Note
3.	UNIVERSAL CREDIT PRESENTATION	
3.1	<u>Noted</u> that the Chief Operating Officer introduced this item and gave a bit of background on the project. They advised members that this presentation will be given at the upcoming IRRV Conference.	Note
3.2	<u>Noted</u> that the Chief Operating Officer explained that Universal Credit had been a long time coming but that we had prepared extensively for it and highlighted some of the actions we had taken:	Note
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring we had sufficient staffing 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appropriate training ▪ Direct contact with tenants affected ▪ Information passed onto all tenants via Voice, website, Facebook etc ▪ Contact/visits to Job Centre + ▪ Digital inclusion work 	Action Required				
3.3	<p><u>Noted</u> that Members were advised that in March 2017 we had 41 cases but we now have 260 cases and this had affected our arrears. The Chief Operating Officer pointed out that we have now gone over 3%, following similar trends to East Lothian Council. A table was displayed highlighting arrears for the Group of tenants on Universal Credit:</p> <table border="0" style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 40px;">Before U/C</td> <td>After U/C</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Arrears = 11%</td> <td>Arrears = 14%</td> </tr> </table>	Before U/C	After U/C	Arrears = 11%	Arrears = 14%	Note
Before U/C	After U/C					
Arrears = 11%	Arrears = 14%					
3.4	<p><u>Noted</u> that 52 cases of those examined had no arrears before Universal Credit. 14 of these cases are now in arrears</p>	Note				
3.5	<p><u>Noted</u> that the Chief Operating Officer finished by pointing out that the findings of this project showed that it was not so much a case of tenants not wanting to pay but more about them not being able to pay due to delays in payments being made.</p>	Note				
3.6	<p><u>Noted</u> that the Housing Officer introduced a video for the case studies for the project and explained that they had spoken with 10 tenants and it very quickly showed that each individual had different experiences. The Housing Officer noted that 8 tenants received the same level of benefit, one tenant received more and one received less.</p>	Note				
3.7	<p><u>Noted</u> that following the video the Housing Officer highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many tenants like the idea of Universal Credit and what it aims to achieve. ▪ Tenants embraced using the online service and 	Note				

	<p>found staff at Job Centre+ to be helpful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hardest thing was not coping with 6 week wait for claim (now reduced to 5 weeks). The Housing Officer pointed that under the old system claimants would wait 2 weeks and money would be backdated. ▪ Tenants are getting into the debt with this waiting period and finding it very difficult to get out of this debt. ▪ Some tenants are going without food, heating etc and are using credit cards or pay day loans to make ends meet. ▪ Tenants having to be referred to foodbank, again usually during the initial 6 week period ▪ Money being sanctioned if certain conditions are not met. 	Action Required
3.8	<u>Noted</u> that members acknowledged that this project had shown the human impact of Universal Credit.	Note
3.9	<u>Noted</u> that a member asked how organisations like Changeworks help tenants and the Chief Operating Officer highlighted the various services offered by this organisation.	Note
3.10	<u>Noted</u> that a member commented that it appeared to be the 6 week delay in payment that was the issue and pointed out that we may need to look at our Debt Management policy to address this issue. This was acknowledged and it was noted that it can take months to sort out arrangements for a suitable arrangement to pay arrears.	Note
3.11	<u>Noted</u> that a member queried whether there was any mechanism in place for payment of housing element directly to Housing Associations. It was noted that there was the option to apply to DWP for an Alternative Payment Arrangement and alternative timescales for payment i.e. twice monthly.	Note
3.12	<u>Noted</u> that it was also pointed out that dealing with claims is much more challenging with Universal Credit as	Note

	we do not have the same relationship with DWP as we did with Midlothian Council.	Action Required
3.13	Noted that the Chief Operating Officer told Members that they will model a revised impact of Universal Credit on arrears in the 5 Year Financial Projections to be presented to the Board in June 2018.	Note
3.14	Noted that the Board asked that their appreciation be noted for staff dealing with this issue.	Note
3.15	The Board noted the contents of this Report <i>The Housing Officer left the meeting at this point</i>	Note
4.	ATFS REPORT ON NEW LOAN FINANCING	
4.1	Minute removed or edited due to information relating to personal/confidential items or being commercially sensitive	
5.	DEVELOPMENT UPDATE	
5.1	Minute removed or edited due to information relating to personal/confidential items or being commercially sensitive	Note
6.	NOVUS EXTENSION	
6.1	Minute removed or edited due to information relating to personal/confidential items or being commercially sensitive	Note
7.	GOVERNANCE	
7.1	Regulatory Framework Noted that the Chair highlighted to members that the Scottish Housing Regulator is undertaking a comprehensive review of its Regulatory Framework. They reminded members that this document is available on the Board area of other website. The Chair noted	Note

that they think things will tighten up but will not change how we work significantly.

**Action
Required**

Notifiable Events

- 7.2 **Noted** that the Regulator has closed off the one on-going issue we had notified them about - Carbon Dioxide at Newbyres Avenue.

Note

SPSO

- 7.3 **Noted** that we have no complaints currently being investigated by the SPSO.

Note

Lobbying Act

- 7.4 **Noted** that the Chief Executive advised that the Lobbying Act (Scotland) 2018 is now in effect. It was pointed out that under the Act, any face to face contact between paid members of organisations and Members of the Scottish Government, Special Advisers or the Permanent Secretary must be recorded in the Lobbying Register. RSLs come within the scope of the Act and we have therefore applied to the Lobbying Register. The Chief Executive suggested that if any Member thinks they have anything that comes under the Act, they should raise it with him in the first instance.

Note

Internal Audit Guidance.

- 7.5 **Noted** that the Chair has prepared this guidance for the SFHA and will do a run through for Members at a future Board Meeting.

Note

GDPR

- 7.6 **Noted** that a report on the implications and steps taken regarding GDPR was included with the papers for this meeting. The Chief Executive told the meeting that:

Note

- staff are working at cleaning up the information they hold

- data maps have been created
- Fair Processing notice had been drafted for employees using the SFHA templates. These will be required for tenants and Board Members also.
- There will be further information brought to the May Board meeting for approval.

**Action
Required**

Board Training

- 7.7 **Noted** that the Vice-Chair gave an update to members on the SFHA Chairs' Conference they attended recently. **Note**
- 7.8 **Noted** that a list of appropriate SFHA Conferences were included in this report and members asked to advise the PA if they would be interested in attending any of these events. **Note**

Board Away Day

- 7.9 **Noted** that the Board Away Days scheduled for 20/21 April have had to be rescheduled due to circumstances outwith our control. The new dates are Friday 26 and Saturday 27 October 2018. **Note**
- 7.10 **Noted** that members were asked to keep Friday 20 April free if possible for a sustainability workshop. This would be followed by a lunch and a visit to the Cala Development at Broomieknowe. **Note**

Stock Tour

- 7.11 **Noted** that Members were reminded about the Stock Tour on Tuesday 8 May 2018. **Note**
- 7.12 The Board **noted** the contents of this Report **Note**

8. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO 31 DECEMBER 2017

- 8.1 **Noted** that the Management Accounts to 31 December 2017 were presented and discussed by the Board in detail and the contents of the report were noted. **Note**

9.	BAD DEBT REPORT	Action Required
9.1	<u>Noted</u> that in line with our Income and Sales Ledger Policy, the Chief Operating Officer explained that she was seeking approval for the Bad Debt write offs for the period to 31 December 2017 (£21,703).	Note
9.2	The Board noted the contents of this report and approved the Bad Debt write off of £21,703.	Note Approve
10.	TENANCY SUPPORT AND MONEY ADVICE SERVICE	
10.1	Minute removed or edited due to information relating to personal/confidential items or being commercially sensitive	
11.	IRONMILLS DEVELOPMENTS LTD (IDL) TEN YEAR FORECAST	
11.1	<u>Noted</u> that the Chief Operating Officer gave a brief overview of the arrangements between Ironmills and Melville and noted that under the agreement, the ten year forecast must be approved by the Melville Board. They explained that this report had been approved by the Board of IDL.	Note
11.2	The Board noted the contents of this report and approved the IDL ten year forecast.	Note Approve
12.	AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES – 4 DECEMBER 2017	
12.1	<u>Noted</u> that the Chair of the Audit Committee advised that these Minutes were approved at the Audit Committee on 12 March and were presented to the Board for information.	Note
12.2	The Board noted the contents of these Minutes.	Note
13.	REGISTERS	
13.1	<u>Noted</u> that the Board were advised:	Note

Payments, Entitlements and Benefits & Declarations of Interests

**Action
Required**

There have been two entries in the Payments, Entitlements and Benefits Register and one entry in the Declaration of Interests

Other Registers

There had been no entries in any of the Registers since they were last presented to the Board.

13.2 All Registers were available for review and were signed by the Chair at the end of the meeting. **Note**

14. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

14.1 **Noted** that there was no AOCB. **Note**

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15.1 **Noted** that the next scheduled meeting of the Board is Wednesday 23 May 2018 at 5.30pm. **Note**